



State of Utah

Department of Natural Resources

MICHAEL R. STYLER
Executive Director

Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands

A. JOEL FRANSDEN
*State Forester/
Division Director*

JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR.
Governor

GARY R. HERBERT
Lieutenant Governor

NEWS RELEASE

May 8, 2006

Contact: Jim Springer (801) 538-5324

BUILDING TO BE DEDICATED IN HONOR OF FIRST UTAH STATE FORESTER

The man who first held the title of Utah State Forester will be honored Monday, May 15, 2006, at 2:00 p.m. when a new building will be dedicated as the "Paul L. Sjoblom Wildfire Service Center." Sjoblom became Utah's first State Forester in 1961 and served in that position for the next 20 years.

The new Wildfire Service Center is located at the Lone Peak Conservation Center, 271 West Bitterbrush Lane in Draper. The Lone Peak Conservation Center has a dual mission of providing seedlings for conservation plantings and providing professional wildland firefighting crews.

"It was due to Paul's dedication and perseverance that many of the programs we now take for granted were begun," said current Utah State Forester Joel Frandsen. "Paul and his staff took an innovative approach to the problems of wildland fire and tackled them head-on, and this new building is just a continuation of Paul's legacy."

Paul and his staff organized the state prison wildland firefighting program. The fledgling program began with 30 ill-equipped and poorly trained prisoners and grew into a nationally recognized and respected Type I "Hot Shot" crew. The prison crew has since been replaced with one of only two state-managed Type I "Hot Shot" crews in the United States. Hot Shots are highly skilled wildland firefighters that often tackle the toughest fires in the roughest terrain.

What is now known as the Federal Excess Property Program also took root during Paul's tenure. The program now supplies military surplus property and essential firefighting equipment to community volunteer fire departments throughout the state.

In addition to the Hot Shots, fire engine crews, initial attack crews, and fuels management crews, a college intern program will be accommodated at the new service center. The Wildfire Service Center will help address the challenges of providing training and experience for a critical resource that can respond not only to wildfire, but also to other emergency situations.

Also on hand for the building's dedication will be Department of Natural Resources Executive Director Michael Styler, members of the legislature, and personnel from other state and federal fire fighting partners.

###